



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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September 9, 2003

TO: Minerals File

FROM: Paul Baker, Senior Reclamation Biologist 

SUBJECT: Site Inspection, Asphalt Ridge, Inc., Cameron #1 Project, S/047/036, Uintah County, Utah

Date of Inspection: August 15, 2003
Time of Inspection: about 12:45 to 1:15 p.m.
Conditions: Mostly clear, 80's
Participants: Doug Jensen and Paul Baker, DOGM

Purpose of Inspection:

We were in the area and wanted to visit the site.

Getting to the site:

Go south from Vernal on SR 45. A little north of the bridge over the Green River, there is a gated road leading back toward the northwest. It's easier to see this road if you're traveling toward Vernal than away from it. The first section of this road is paved. Take this road and veer left as you start getting in to some of the disturbances. The mine site is about 1/4-1/2 mile from the highway.

Observations:

Various views of the mine are shown in Photos 1-4. Photo 4 is a panorama containing five different photos, and while there is some slight distortion, it appears to be an accurate representation of this portion of the mine site.

The mine is bordered on two sides by wetland areas, and part of the mine was probably within the wetland before it was disturbed. There is some running water, particularly in the green area shown on the right side of Photo 4. The water has been diverted around the mine.

The mine area consists of a cut through something of a low ridge. There was some water seeping in to the pit area, and there was also some oil oozing from the pit walls and floor. The area of Photo 4 where the vehicle is parked appears to be a processing area.

In addition to the mine area shown in Photo 4, there is a stockpile area, and the location of this area is shown on maps in the file.

According to information in the file, about 10 acres of disturbance was reclaimed in about 1994. It is not easy to distinguish these reclaimed areas from the currently permitted disturbance.

Some runoff water from the pit would go directly into the small stream that bypasses the mine, and from there, I assume, into the Green River. There is no sediment control.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Because there is so much previous disturbance in the area, I suggest that the operator use T-posts or something similar to mark the mine site. Otherwise, it is easy to mistake old disturbances with those for which the operator is responsible.

The areas reclaimed in 1994 appear to have been a mixture of exploration and mine areas. The record about whether the exploration areas were released is incomplete. It does appear they were released by the Bureau of Land Management, but except that the file had been archived, there is no indication the Division ever released them. The Division may have accepted the recommendation from the Bureau of Land Management although there is no record of this. The next time the mine is inspected, it would be good to take some of the exploration maps and check some of the sites to ensure holes have been plugged and that vegetation has become established.

Likewise, the record is incomplete about release of some mine areas. The mine was apparently about to be issued a notice of noncompliance for exceeding five acres of disturbance before filing a bond or a large mine notice of intention. There was about 2.5 acres of excess disturbance that was reclaimed in response to this concern, but there is no record that this area was ever officially released. I believe it is most likely that the operator regraded these areas after which the Division allowed the operator to submit a Notice of Intention to Commence Small Mining Operations. The area was probably never inspected for revegetation success, and this should be done. Since it has been about nine years since the site was regraded, even natural revegetation would probably be adequate.

I suggest that a silt fence or a row of straw bales be placed to treat any potential runoff from the mine into the stream. Although I don't believe there is much risk for serious contamination of the stream, I still believe it would be best to take this step.

PBB:jb

cc: Sam Arentz, Asphalt Ridge, Inc.

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ATTACHMENT

Photographs

S/047/036, Cameron #1 Mine, Asphalt Ridge, Inc.

Inspection Dated: August 15, 2003; Report Dated: September 9, 2003



Photo 1. Oil seeping into the bottom of the pit.



Photo 3. A portion of the mine excavation (foreground) one of the wetland areas (center), and the storage and loading area on the flat area in the distance.



Photo 2. A portion of the mine excavation.

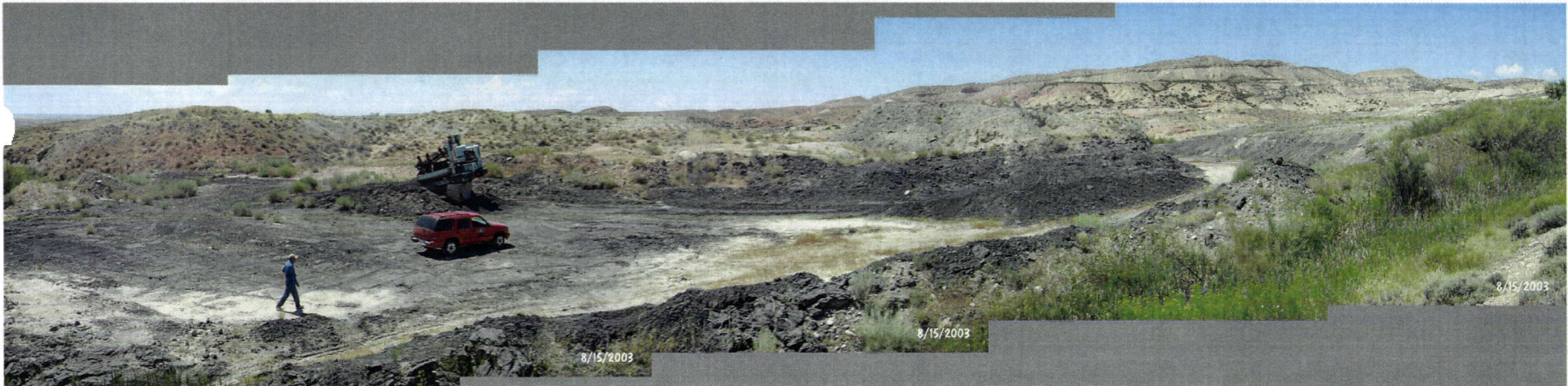


Photo 4. A panorama consisting of five photographs in the mine area. In the green area on the right of the picture is a small stream. The mine excavation is in the center right portion of the photo.